

Talking about English Vocabulary

Essential Phrases for International Students of English

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This document is for international students who are taking English classes and want to speak to their classmates about new vocabulary.

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Learning meaning, pronunciation & grammar

Meaning & Level

What does this word mean?

How many meanings does the word have?

Can you give me an example sentence?

Do you know the level of the word? Is it B1, B2, or C1?

Pronunciation (How you say a word)

How do you pronounce this word?

How many syllables are there?

Where is the word stress?

Which syllable has primary stress? Which syllable has secondary stress?

Word class (noun, verb, adverb, adjective etc.)

What is the word class of this word? What kind of word is this?

Is it a noun, verb, adjective, adverb, or something else?

Are there other parts of speech from this word?

This word is a verb. Is there a noun? The adjective is ... so what's the adverb?

Nouns (countability)

Is this noun countable, uncountable, or both?

If it is countable, what is the plural form?

If it's both, does the countability depend on the meaning or the usage?

Verbs (transitive/intransitive)

Is this verb transitive, intransitive, or both? Does it need an object or not?

Does the transitivity depend on the meaning or the usage?

Can I use this verb with a direct and indirect object?

What structures can I use with this verb?

Extending vocabulary

Synonyms & antonyms

Can you think of a synonym? I mean, are there any words or phrases with the same or a similar meaning?

Can you think of an antonym? I mean are there any words or phrases with the opposite meaning?

Academic Vocabulary

Is it an academic word?

Is it on the Academic Word List (AWL)?

Which sub-list (of the AWL) is it on?

Is it on OPAL (Oxford Phrasal Academic Lexicon)?

Is it on the OPAL spoken list or written list?

Collocation (Word Association)

What other words does this word collocate with?

What other words does it go together with?

What other words is it often used with?

Can you think of any academic collocations - like **significant + impact**

Usage

Are there any notes in the dictionary about how to use this word?

Is this word slang or colloquial?

Can I use it in everyday conversation?

Can I use this word in idioms?

Can I use this word in a formal essay?

Classroom Dialogue: Vocabulary Lab

(Google Gemini, 2026)

Setting

Mateo and Lin are sitting together in an EAP seminar room, working through a vocabulary extension task before their academic writing lecture.

Mateo: Hey Lin, do you have a minute to look at these vocabulary words for our afternoon seminar? I want to make sure I really understand how to use them in our upcoming essay.

Lin: Of course, Mateo! Let's do it. What's the first word on your list?

Mateo: The first one is *enroll*. **What does this word mean?**

Lin: Well, to *enroll* means to officially register or join a course or a university program.

Mateo: Okay, **how many meanings does the word have?**

Lin: It generally just has that one main meaning related to joining an organization or institution, though it can apply to school, the military, or a voting list. **Can you give me an example sentence?**

Mateo: Sure, let me try: "Many international students enroll in the pre-sessional English program." By the way, **do you know the level of the word? Is it B1, B2, or C1?**

Lin: It's a B2 level word, which is upper-intermediate, so it's perfect for our academic writing. Let's look at how to say it next. **How do you pronounce this word?**

Mateo: En-roll. **How many syllables are there?**

Lin: There are two syllables. **Where is the word stress? Which syllable has primary stress? Which syllable has secondary stress?**

Mateo: I think the primary stress is on the second syllable—en-roll (/ɪnˈroʊl/). It doesn't really have a secondary stress since it's only two syllables. Now, what about the grammar? **What is the word class of this word?** I mean, **what kind of word is this? Is it a noun, verb, adjective, adverb, or something else?**

Lin: **This word is a verb. Is there a noun?** Yes, the noun form is *enrollment*. **Are there other parts of speech from this word?** Not many common ones, though *enrolled* can act as a participial adjective, like "an enrolled student." Since it's a verb, we should check its grammar. **Is this verb transitive, intransitive, or both?** I mean, **does it need an object or not?**

Mateo: It can actually be both! You can say "I enrolled in the course," where it's intransitive, or "The university enrolled 500 new students," where it acts transitively. So, **does the transitivity depend on the meaning or the usage?**

Lin: It definitely depends on the usage and how you structure the sentence. **Can I use this verb with a direct and indirect object?** No, you can't say "The university enrolled me the course." Instead, **what structures can I use with this verb?** You usually use the pattern "enroll *in* something" or "enroll someone *in* something."

Mateo: Got it. Okay, the second word is from the Academic Word List: *analysis*. **What does this word mean?**

Lin: It means the detailed examination of something complex in order to understand it. Let's look at its grammar first. **Is this noun countable, uncountable, or both?**

Mateo: It can actually be both! **If it's both, does the countability depend on the meaning or the usage?**

Lin: It depends on the usage. When we talk about the general process of examining data, it's often uncountable. But when you talk about a specific report or study, it's countable. **If it is countable, what is the plural form?**

Mateo: Oh, I know this one because it's irregular. The plural is *analyses* (spelled with an -es). Let's check the other word forms. **The adjective is *analytical*, so what's the adverb?**

Lin: That would be *analytically*. Let's check how to say it. **How do you pronounce this word?**

Mateo: For the noun *analysis*, it's /ə'næl.ə.sɪs/. **How many syllables are there?** Four syllables: a-nal-y-sis. **Where is the word stress? Which syllable has primary stress?**

Lin: The primary stress is on the second syllable: a-*nal*-y-sis. But watch out, because if we look at the verb form, *analyze*, the primary stress moves to the first syllable!

Mateo: This is incredibly helpful, Lin. I think we are completely ready for the seminar now.

Suggested self-study

Why not practice your English with an AI conversational partner. Here is a suggested prompt:

Student Copy-and-Paste Prompt

Prompt: "I want to practise my English speaking and academic vocabulary. We are going to roleplay the EAP dialogue from my class.

You will play the role of **Mateo**. I will play the role of **Lin**.

Please only speak **one turn at a time** (do not write the whole conversation at once). Wait for me to reply before you give Mateo's next line. Let's start from the beginning of the script.

Mateo, you can say the first line now!"

Tip/ If you are using the mobile apps for Gemini or ChatGPT, remember to turn on the **Voice/Audio Mode** (the little headphone icon). That way, you can actually *speak* your lines aloud at home and listen to the AI reply.

Reference

Google Gemini. (2026). *Gemini* (July 11 version) [Large language model].

<https://gemini.google.com/>